

## Response to “Improving medical education in Kenya: an international collaboration”

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3163/1536-5050.103.1.014>

Alexa Mayo has presented a comprehensive account of an international collaboration to help meet medical education information needs in Kenya [1]. The process and outcomes of the collaboration are described in sufficient detail; however, the description also begs the question as to what steps might next be necessary to further the broad aims of the programme. Even though the programme emphasizes the importance of providing resources that fit with the needs of Kenya, most of the content shared will inevitably be Western in origin. Whilst reading content produced by Western academics is undoubtedly

better than nothing; surely, it would be much better if Kenyan academics were to start to write and publish their own articles.

Medical librarians would certainly be well placed to help such academics. To publish articles in biomedical journals, research and writing skills are required. The first step in research is usually a literature search, and medical librarians would be well placed to help here. Their advanced skills in medical information could help with meta-analyses and systematic reviews, which often form the basis of a research project and indeed can result in a publication in their own right. Medical librarians also often have skills in research itself and in medical writing. Most often, confidence is the first attribute that needs to be developed amongst budding academics. The first publication is frequently the hardest;

however, medical librarians would be well placed to help such academics choose their first journal wisely.

A further more ambitious step might be that Kenya could start to produce its own journals. Modern technology means that barriers to such initiatives are now much lower than they were. Once again, a bottom-up approach to change would be best. Such an approach would take time, but in the long term would be transformational.

*Kieran Walsh, FRCPI,  
kmwalsh@bmjgroup.com,  
BMJ Group, Tavistock Square,  
London, United Kingdom*

## References

1. Mayo A. Improving medical education in Kenya: an international collaboration. *J Med Lib Assoc.* 2014 Apr; 102(2):96–100. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3163/1536-5050.102.2.007>.